

DR LLOYD CLARKE

VIA EMAIL: rllc.nichol@ahs.ca

July 17, 2018

Dr. Rowland Nichol
Associate Chief Medical Officer
Alberta Health Services
10301 Southport Lane SW
Calgary T2W 1S7

Dear Dr. Nichol:

Following is my response to the matters raised in the complaint regarding the incident that occurred in Cardston on May 25, 2018.

Let me first of all say that I regret the choice of words and the tone I used on May 25, 2018. However, I deny being racist and my comments that day, while inappropriate, were not racist. If given the opportunity, I would like to apologize to the individuals involved for my hurtful comments.

By way of background, as an Associate Zone Medical Leader in the South Zone, I am often called on to participate in First Nation events, liaison work with the Blood Tribe and the Piikani Tribe, and whenever there are issues relating to indigenous people I am called on to be a part of this. I sit in many meetings within AHS talking about the issues related to substance abuse, alcohol and narcotic use, clean injection sites, overdoses, and advice regarding appropriate placement of funds that will best serve the needs of this underserved and vulnerable population. It can be quite frustrating in my position to serve in this capacity, and then drive home and see that it seems to have no effect on the actual problems within my own hometown, as I witness firsthand street people and their needs.

On the issues of loitering and street people - just the day before this incident, I had a lengthy conversation with a member of the Chamber of Commerce about the issue of street people loitering, petitioning shoppers for money and begging. I am aware that many of our citizens have ceased going downtown by themselves due to the aggressive nature of some street people. I have often purchased food for the street people, as many of the community do. My conversations with First Nation staff at the hospital is that they are increasingly frustrated with the behavior of the street people, as it affects the way people treat all First Nations. They feel that non-First Nations people judge all of them by the actions of these street people when they urinate in public, drink alcohol and other intoxicants publicly, and loiter in groups. They have told me that each of these individuals have a place to stay and there are plenty of resources for them to access so that they do not have to live on the street.

At the time of this incident, I was under considerable stress as a result of the Stephan case being in the news and in social media. The accusations that I am a murderer, a perjurer and not a person of faith were something that I could not shake off. My wife remarked in retrospect that I was not myself in the days leading up to this event.

In hindsight, I recognize that the Stephan matter was affecting me more than I realized. I believe that this stress contributed to my conduct on May 25. I have subsequently engaged with a therapist to help me deal with the stress arising out of the Stephan case and the incident on May 25, 2018, which has been helpful.

In addition, I have recently participated in a Sundance with members of the Blood Tribe to increase my understanding of the barriers faced by First Nations. Please find attached a narrative of my participation in this First Nations event.

My recollection of the Incident is set out below. Attached are statements obtained from the two staff members who were with me, and the clerk from the Red Rooster. Also attached is a letter of support from Professor Lois Frank for your consideration, and my CV.

The Incident

On May 25, 2018, at about 9:45 a.m., on my way to my morning clinic, I stopped in at the Red Rooster convenience store as part of my routine to get a snack. I met a couple of our clinic staff, Alisha Olsen and Becky Leavitt, and witnessed the following events.

I had noticed on my way into the store that there was a particularly large number of street people waiting near the store entrance that morning for the bottle depot to open. At least 12 people were milling around the area near the doors. This was not an uncommon occurrence, as they are often there, but I had never seen this many street people at once all together. I was annoyed by them loitering by the convenience store, as they were unkempt and represented an intimidating presence by their sheer numbers.

As I got to my car – something inside me just went off – and I yelled at them loudly that "this is not right, you guys need to get a job!" I followed that up with something to the effect of "you can't sit and loiter around here like this!" By this time, I had moved closer to them as I spoke and was no longer yelling. Within seconds of my approaching them, two individuals ran up to me and got very close to me, they screamed obscenities at me, telling me to leave them alone. The gist of their comments was rather obscure, but it was very aggressive and threatening in nature. I have never been afraid of the street people (I see them all the time in the ER and we know each other) but these two men who confronted me were not street people. They were relatively clean dressed and well kept. They very aggressively yelled at me, got within inches of my face with gestures and spitting words at me of an obscene nature, accusing me (the white man) of being the problem, that this was their land and it was my fault these people had no jobs and no hope. I tried to say that all I meant was that for them to sit in such large numbers was intimidating to others and that loitering like this was not good for anyone. I asked them to consider how it is for other members of the community. The street people themselves said or did very little in response to any of this. But the other two

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jumped up and yelled at me, even at one point saying, "Hit me, come on, let's go", to which I replied, "Why would I get violent? I don't want violence."

A few years ago, as I walked into my clinic, I encountered a few individuals trying to start a car in the parking lot with the hood up, looking in. As I walked by, they jokingly turned to me and said, "Saaaa, Dr. Clarke, I think it needs some Tylenol # 3 to fix it!" This was hilarious to us all at the time, and has stuck in my mind as a humorous anecdote. It was perhaps alluding to this event that I then tried to interject some humor into this predicament on May 25th, when I said something to the effect of, "You want some T3's, that'll fix this, eh!" Needless to say, this did not work. I did, however, ask these two men their names and introduced myself. I actually thought I could repair this on the spot and have a little dialogue with them. They said, "Oh, we're gonna get this guy on Facebook now, hey boys. We're gonna really go after him, eh!"

I actually started to become a little fearful, as I realized how outnumbered I was, and retreated across the parking lot to where a well-dressed mature woman (who I now know as Sally Good Striker) was standing. She was talking with another street person – it looked like she was giving him something. As I approached her, she walked towards the group, including these two men, and gently hushed them, saying a few words in Blackfoot repeatedly. She gently told me, "Don't bother talking to them, you can't change them." As she spoke to them, they dissipated and backed off. Her command of the situation was remarkable.

Unfortunately, I had to walk near them to get to my car and this caused them to come at me again, spitting threatening words and accusations, the details of which I cannot recall. This time I just got in my car and drove away.

As I pulled from the parking lot an RCMP car drove up. I have subsequently been told that the store clerk called them. I circled back and pointed out to the officer the two individuals who had been the most threatening. I did not give any details of the event and didn't even get out of my car, just gesturing through the window who and where. Following this, I drove to my clinic and proceeded with seeing my patients.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that I do regret what I said on May 25, 2018, and hope to have an opportunity to apologize to the individuals involved. I look forward to meeting with you on July 19, 2018, to discuss this matter further.

Yours truly,



Dr. Lloyd T. Clarke